

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, November 24, 1904, with transcript

Copy of a letter written by Alexander Graham Bell to his wife, Mabel (Hubbard) Bell. Beinn Bhreagh, C. B. Thursday, November 24, 1904 My sweet darling wife:

Just received awfully nice letter from you dated November 21, 1904 — but nothing but the postmark to show where letter was written. I do wish you could form the habit of beginning every note with the place where written and the date when written including the year . Most of your letters bear neither place nor date — and when given the year is generally omitted. When your children, grandchildren, or other descendants, look over your letters to me — to find out something about our lives — as you have looked over your mother's letters to find out something about your father — they will be met with the same difficulty that you have experienced — they will be unable to find out from your letters when anything happened — or where you were when you wrote the letters. Of course you are not writing for them especially — but your letters are too nice to be destroyed — and every letter should bear upon its face — as the very first item noted the place and date. You never can tell what importance may attach to these items at some time in the future. Events are inter-related — and a casual mention in an old letter often enables a historian to ascertain the date of an entirely different event. If I had neglected to date my letters to you in the old telephone days — I would often have been unable to give the dates of experiments. I speak of myself — not of my lawyers — the letters were not published or unnecessarily brought before the courts — but they were of use to me personally in refreshing my memory — and they enabled me to give with confidence the dates of experiments — and enabled me to give years after the letters were written — a correct account of my 2 movements at different times. On certain dates they showed that I was in Canada at Brantford or Toronto — at others travelling in the cars — or in Washington, New York,

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Salem or Boston. I could not — from memory alone — have traced these movements or have given even approximate dates.

Received telegram from you today (Thanksgiving Day in the U. S.) asking Mr. Bell to distributed turkeys, chickens, etc., to the people here. I telegraphed you in reply that the turkeys, chickens, etc., would be distributed according to your instructions but that tomorrow was my thanksgiving day.

Of course you understood what I meant — the anniversary of the day when you gave yourself to me — as well as your own birthday and Thanksgiving Day at the time. It is my thanksgiving day truly — and I shall always bless and remember the 25th of November. Somehow or other it takes precedence in my heart of the 11th of July — the other anniversary that is surrounded by a halo — the sacred halo of the Saints. But the 25th of November comes back to me with all its flood of memories. I had given you up as hopeless — so far above me — and I felt that you did not really care for me as I cared for you. I was disheartened and had even been forbidden the house. I had made up my mind that I would not go — but then the fact that it was your birthday and Thanksgiving Day came over me. A sudden impulse seized me. I grit my teeth together and decided that I would prefer to be turned away — rather than go of my own accord. How often sudden impulses like this have affected my life. Somehow — I know not how — I found myself in the Cambridge car — and then again my troubles began. I would go on to Mt. Auburn and not go in. But when we reached Brattle St. — I stopped the car at the usual place — 3 and got out full of fear and trembling as to the result. And then the revulsion of feeling. Instead of turning me away you were expecting me — and watching for me to come — and the tears in your dear eyes showed that I was welcome. Your father and mother and all too bade me welcome. And then the little room upstairs — and Willie Hubbard's face when he peeped in at the door.

I bless the day and bless you. You have been a sweet darling wife to me — and I only wish I were more worthy of the love you have shown to me.

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But John McDermid is here for the mail — the steamer has changed to an early hour. I have risen from bed to write this — but John has come and I must close.

With a heartful of love Your own, Alec. Mrs. A. G. Bell, Twin Oaks, Woodley Lane,
Washington, D. C.